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Both were white and between 21 and 40 years old. ■ Anyone with information should call 0300 333 4444, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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Project 1: Managing CM40EW - Junction 14 & 15 off the A12

Billericay Town Council blamed the action on uninspired public

Olympic group has disbanded after lack of interest

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A WORKING party formed to help Billericay benefit from the Olympic Games next year has been disbanded due to a "lack of interest" from local groups.

Billericay Town Council had formed an Olympic working party in April this year to consult local organisations on how the town could benefit from London 2012.

After just three months, however, the group has been broken up, with town councillors blaming a lack of interest.

Mark

As it stands, Billericay is not set to mark the Games in any way.

Town councillor Jim Devlin, chairman of the finance and general purposes committee, said the authority consulted a number of local organisations but did not receive any positive feedback.

"If no one wants to participate there is no point trying to facilitate nobody," he said.

One idea put forward was to open up school fields for people to camp in during the sporting spectacle. Jonathan Rowlands, assistant head teacher at Mayflower High School, confirmed the school was approached by the town council as regards letting out its fields for camping, but said

the school had "reservations" about doing so, as the fields are used by summer activity groups.

"We can't do anything as we don't own any land," Cllr Devlin added.

"Staging events would be expensive, so it was a case of us encouraging people and it didn't appear anyone was interested."

However, the town council's accusation of a lack of interest among local groups has received an angry rebuke from Trevor Draper, the chairman of the Billericay Chamber of Commerce.

Not fussed

The chamber was cited by Cllr Devlin as one group which "was not fussed" about the Games.

But in response, Mr Draper accused the town council of not acting soon enough to enable the town to benefit from the event.

Mr Draper said: "It is not that we have a lack of interest or didn't want to be involved to try to develop the potential, the council left it too late."

"I have always been in favour of supporting anything that brings people to our town."

"The fact the council was unwilling in the last two-and-a-half years to get their act together is not my problem. It is sad they should point the finger at anyone else other than themselves."



NO INTEREST: The town council has disbanded its Olympics working party

Games bid timeline

- 2003: The bid team is formed
- January 2004: Bid officially launched at Covent Garden. An applicant's questionnaire is sent to the International Olympic Committee (IOC)
- May 2004: IOC puts London, Madrid, Moscow, New York and Paris on a shortlist. Lord Sebastian Coe becomes chairman of the bid company
- May-November 2004: Candidate file is put together, detailing how the Games will be staged
- February 2005: IOC's Evaluation Committee visits London to inspect plans
- February-July 2005: London 2012 team works on the final bid presentation and public support reaches 75 per cent
- July 6, 2005: Delegation travels to Singapore to make its final presentation. Members of the IOC vote in secret
- IOC president Jacques Rogge announces London as the 2012 host, winning by 54 votes to 50

In brief

Revamped skate park to be reopened

BILLERICAY: The official opening of the town's revamped skate park takes place on Saturday.

There will be demonstrations and competitions between midday and 4pm at the facility in Lake Meadows Park.

Refreshments will be provided by Rico Maza, the new owner of the park's cafe.

The opening will cost the town council about £300, with funds also being provided by Essex County Council.

Members of the Billericay Youth Town Council will be filming the event as part of a DVD to be sent to Billericay's twin town of Fishers, in the US state of Indiana.

MP slams Murdoch

BILLERICAY: The town's MP John Baron has welcomed the announcement that Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation has withdrawn its bid for the broadcaster BSkyB in the wake of the phone hacking allegations which forced the News of the World to close.

Mr Baron said: "Given the revelations, particularly about phone hacking interfering with police investigations, it cannot be right to allow News Corporation to take control of BSkyB. I welcome the news that the bid has been withdrawn."

He added: "The tabloids may be under increasing pressure when trying to compete with the internet, but this can be no excuse for practices which are both illegal and ethically wrong."

Human rights chief in secret talks with Dale Farm gypsies

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they will do what they can to help."

Cllr Ball met with Mr Phillips and Crays Hill residents at the Basildon Centre on Monday afternoon.

"It is the first time they have listened to representatives from the settled community as well as the travellers," added Cllr Ball.

"If they have got anything they can do, they will come up with some proposals."

A 2009 commission report regarding the inequalities experienced by traveller communities stated: "The continuing cycle of evictions associated with homelessness among caravan-dwelling gypsies and travellers is a shameful blot on the face of Britain."

It goes on to read: "Irish travellers currently at Dale Farm...experience the full weight of hostile political power, despite valiant legal and community struggles."

Mr Phillips declined to speak to the Gazette in person. However, a spokes-



MEETINGS: Tony Ball leader of Basildon Borough Council

man for his commission said: "It is in the interest of all parties to find a peaceful solution to the situation at Dale Farm. Neither the gypsy and traveller residents nor the wider settled community will benefit from a costly eviction."

"Representatives from the commission made a private visit to Dale Farm to listen to what all parties have to say to help find a way forward that is acceptable to all."

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